

## Local Boundary Commission

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**Cc:** "Paul K Matter" <[pmatter@fs.fed.us](mailto:pmatter@fs.fed.us)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2003 12:28 PM  
**Attach:** Borough FormationComments 030210.doc  
**Subject:** Comments on borough formation in the Icy Straits area.

Attached are my personal comments on borough formation in the northern SE Alaska area. Please forward them to the commission and make them a part of the record. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

(See attached file: Borough FormationComments 030210.doc)

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February 11, 2003

Subject: Borough Formation for Cross Sound, Icy Straits, Lynn Canal, And Chatham Straits areas.

Dear Sir/Madam

I have lived in SE Alaska for twelve years and been a resident of Hoonah for the last five years. I am the Hoonah District Ranger on the Tongass National Forest and am well acquainted with all the communities of the northern SE Alaska. The following comments are mine alone and do not represent the position of the Forest Service.

Although the communities in the Northern Tongass are unique, each having its own industries, people and political forces, we all share the same marine waterways and the surrounding forests. Our communities futures are bound together whether we like it or not and cooperation will be the keystone for a prosperous future.

The best way for the small communities of northern Southeast Alaska to influence our future and protect our communities is to come together with a strong borough government. This will not be a popular position in some communities for a variety of reasons, the biggest reason being fear, the fear of having their communities wishes ignored, fear of taxes, fear of restrictions, fear of losing economic advantage, fear of losing control etc. I have the opposite view, I fear a future without any ability to effect the immediate world around us. I believe we need a locally elected representative form of borough government to protect and promote our communities interests and have a strong regional voice. If we don't govern ourselves, others will govern for us.

Logical borough boundaries are needed. The State and region would be better served if borough boundaries were redrawn and all communities and lands were in logically borough units with reasonably populations and land size. Boroughs should be large enough to encompass multiple communities with similar interests and overlapping land use. In addition, boroughs need to be large enough to stimulate a variety of economic benefits and options for revenue generation. Large multi community boroughs will have the influence necessary to tackle the tough issues of growth, land use, taxation and equitable schools funding. To best serve the region several of the existing boroughs should be modified. Huge borough land areas serving single communities are not logical and unfairly take resources away from nearby small communities. Small rural communities are more dependent on borough governments and rural lands than larger cities and should have generous amounts of land within the boundaries of their boroughs.

I recommend all northern SE Alaska small communities (Pelican, Elfin Cove, Gustavus, Hoonah, Angoon, Excursion Inlet, Haines and Skagway be in one borough. The land area should include all Glacier Bay National Parks lands that drain into Cross Sound or Icy Strait), Admiralty Island, Chichagof Island north of a line thru Peril Strait to North arm of Hoonah Sound then follow the Hoonah Sitka Ranger District boundaries the Gulf of Alaska. The west side of Lynn Canal from Icy Strait to Skagway

and east side north of Berners Bay should also be part of this borough. Having several diverse communities in the borough will keep any one from having an overly large influence and require cooperation among elected representatives.

If the proposed borough in the above paragraph is politically unacceptable, then shrink it down to the communities on both sides of Cross Sound and Icy Straits (Pelican, Elfin Cove, Gustavus, Hoonah and Excursion Inlet. Tenekee Springs and Angoon should also be considered for this borough. These communities all share the same lands and waterways for business, subsistence and recreation and have the potential to impact each other, therefore are ideally suited to work together in one borough. Glacier Bay National Park, all of Hoonah Ranger District and the southern end the Chilkat Range to St. James Bay should be within the borough boundary, Admiralty Island and SE Chichagof too if Angoon and Tenekee are in this borough.

The best decisions on borough units will not be easy and will not be popular with some of the communities or residents. I encourage you take bold actions, to do what is best for the long term. Decisions on borough formation and changes will only get more difficult in the future. The political pressures will be great to leave the existing boroughs boundaries alone and only look at the unorganized areas and towns, but this would be a mistake in the long run.

Good luck in your endeavor.

/S/ Paul Matter